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USPTC Program Office Enables Fiscal Policy Tri-Lateral Workshop for NPS Faculty

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By Lori Meeks

The U.S. Department of State and the Naval Postgraduate School's United States Partnership for Peace Training and Education Center (USPTC) Program Office partnered with the Government of Brazil to co-host a two-day Domestic Finance for Development (DF4D) policy workshop. In an October 24 joint statement, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Brazil's Minister of External Relations Antonio de Aguiar Patriota praised the policy development workshop held October 9-10 in Brasilia.

Faculty from NPS, in its capacity as the USPTC, worked closely with the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and Government of Brazil institutions to lead discussion during the two-day workshop, which also included presentations by tax and budgeting officials from El Salvador, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic. This trilateral approach is aligned with one of Secretary Clinton's key priorities for Development Diplomacy.

DF4D is a Department of State policy initiative intended to strengthen fiscal management and transparency in partner nations, thus promoting stability and sustainable economic growth and prosperity. Under DF4D, the Department of State seeks to achieve the following goals:

- Strengthen the political will for improving transparency and fighting corruption within partner countries.
- Provide technical assistance, such as taxation expertise, in partner countries including through innovative public-private partnerships.
- Elevate the importance and interrelation of domestic resource mobilization, fiscal transparency, and anti-corruption efforts in public finance as key components for sustainable economic development.

The Brazilian Finance Ministry's School of Public Finance Administration (ESAF) hosted this first U.S.-Brazil trilateral activity under the DF4D initiative. The event was a collaborative effort of the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Embassy Brasilia, and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC). NPS Faculty from the Defense Resources Management Institute (DRMI) developed and delivered the academic content, in partnership with Brazilian subject matter experts. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Jose Fernandez gave a keynote speech at the workshop. He underscored that through DF4D, "we want to help countries position themselves to take ownership of their own development by gathering the necessary resources from domestic sources."

The workshop came to fruition through a cooperative effort led by USPTC Program Office Project Manager Nathan Christensen, "The genesis of this inter-agency program began by reaching out to the Department of State, and identifying the opportunity to match NPS capabilities with DF4D needs." NPS faculty were then recruited to provide the theoretical background in the four core areas of fiscal transparency, while Brazilian officials provided real-world examples of the successful adoption of these principles to lead a policy discussion on opportunities and challenges in this area. Participating NPS faculty included Dr. Francois Melese, Director of DRMI; Dr. Robert McNab, Associate Professor at DRMI and Interim Chair of the Global Public Policy Academic Group (GPPAG); and DRMI Associate Professors Dr. Diana Angelis and Dr. Anke Richter.

The first day of the workshop was structured to allow the NPS faculty to provide a theoretical overview of the four common core areas of fiscal transparency: policy, public expenditures, revenue management, and budget execution and performance evaluation to provide a framework for consultations with participating countries. According to Dr. McNab, the team was "able to leverage ongoing efforts by other USG and international organizations to focus on key topics where the participant countries identified strengths and challenges to furthering fiscal reform." In each of these four areas, Brazilian experts from the Ministry of Planning, Receita Federal (Brazil's tax administration), and the National Treasury also provided real-world examples of how Brazil has become a model of fiscal transparency in Latin America over the course of three decades.

This event set the stage for follow-on collaboration with participating countries to encourage fiscal transparency and discourage corruption while making tax administration and budget execution more efficient and effective. As Secretary Clinton stated in a May 2011 speech, "...corruption, lack of transparency, and poorly functioning tax systems are major barriers to long-term growth in many developing countries." The State Department and the Naval Postgraduate School look forward to continued collaboration on DF4D and will work together to emphasize that good governance and accountability are integral to sustainable, broad-based development.



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